



News Release

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Step Up, Guys

Utah Men Urged to Take Control of Their Health

(Salt Lake City, UT) – This year it’s estimated that more than 1,300 Utah men ages 19-64 will die as a result of injuries, cancer, and heart disease. What’s even more surprising is that the majority of these deaths can be prevented. To encourage men to “Step Up” and take control of their health, the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) and the Utah Healthy Living Foundation have teamed up to celebrate National Men’s Health Week, June 15-21, 2009.

“While the life-expectancy gap between men and women has decreased, it’s no secret that men tend to take more risks with their health than women,” said Dr. David Sundwall, UDOH Executive Director. “For example, men smoke more, wear seat belts less, and don’t seek medical help as often. These behaviors can be harmful, but it’s never too late for any of us men to ‘step up’ and make choices that will help us live longer, healthier lives.”

Governor Huntsman signed a proclamation at the state capitol today declaring June 15-21 as Men’s Health Week in Utah. The Healthy Living Foundation is also sponsoring a series of educational workshops on men’s health topics and a 5K run during the week to encourage men to take control of their health.

“Men’s health affects everyone. It’s time for us men to step up by taking better control of our health,” said Dr. Steve Gange, President of the Utah Healthy Living Foundation.

“Many of the health risks that men face – like colon cancer and heart disease – can be prevented or treated with early diagnosis and screening.”

UDOH data show that:

1. Injuries are the leading cause of death for men ages 19-64. In 2006, men were involved in 76% of all fatal car crashes and of those only 51% wore seat belts.
2. Cancer is the second leading cause of death for men ages 19-64, yet only 60% of men 50 and older had a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy to prevent colon cancer (the 3rd leading cause of cancer death in Utah) in the past five years.
3. Cardiovascular disease is the third leading cause of death for men ages 19-64 in Utah, yet in 2007, only 29% of men knew the signs and symptoms of a heart attack and only 42% knew the signs of a stroke.

Eight easy things men can do for themselves and their families are:

- Wear a seat belt every time you are in a vehicle.
- Wear a helmet when driving or riding on an ATV, bicycle, motorcycle, or other motorized vehicle.
- Get your cholesterol and blood pressure checked, starting at age 35.
- Talk to your doctor about prostate cancer starting at age 40.
- If there is no family history, get screened for colon cancer starting at age 50.
- Quit smoking.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Get regular physical activity.

The UDOH has created a web page with prevention tips and resources on other men's health issues like arthritis, asthma, depression, stroke, obesity, skin cancer, and violence. The site also has a list of events being held during Men's Health Week. To learn more visit www.health.utah.gov/menshealth.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.